UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH LABORATORY
SOUTH FERRY ROAD
NARRAGANSETT, RHODE ISLAND 02882

March 9, 1987

SUBJECT: City Task Force Commission Hearing on Ciba Geigy Chemical Plant

FROM: James L. Lake, Environmental Scientist JLL
ERL-Narragansett

TO: Frank Battaglia (HSC-CAVS)
Waste Mgmt Div., Region I

As a result of our discussion on 3/6/87, Dr. Richard Pruell and I have decided that the best approach for the 3/9/87 City Task Force Commission Hearing on the demolition and environmental monitoring of the Ciba Geigy Plant is to coordinate our input with Region I personnel. Since we think it is important for EPA to present a unified approach to the environmental issues that may be raised at the hearing, we will not attend.

My absence from the hearing does not reflect a lack of interest in the scientific and policy issues that research studies suggest need to be addressed before the plant can be granted a corrective action permit. Research studies have found numerous potentially toxic contaminants in the water and sediment near the plant and in sediment and organisms (including commercially important species) in a large portion of Narragansett Bay (Lake, et al., 1981; Pruell et al., 1984; Jungclaus, et al., 1978; Hites and Lopez-Avila, 1979). I feel that the present distributions of these compounds should be determined and that the potential consequences to the environment near the plant and in Narragansett Bay should be understood before a non-revocable corrective action permit is granted.

The Ciba Geigy Plant has utilized chlorinated phenols in its synthetic processes. As a consequence, I strongly recommend that the concentrations of chlorinated dibenzodioxins and chlorinated dibenzofurans in the sediments and soils near the plant and the sediments of the Pawtuxet River and Cove be determined by a laboratory utilizing high resolution mass spectrometric techniques and capable of quantitating these compounds at the part per trillion level.

If you have any questions, please contact me at FTS 838-5087.

cc: N. Jaworski
R. Garnas
R. Pruell
J. Quinn, GSO